



NEWS RELEASE

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New Alfons Gallery Exhibit Honors “Women of Importance”

Day of the Dead exhibit on view October 29-November 17

Milwaukee, WI, October 19, 2017 – Alfons Gallery will continue its annual tradition of presenting a fall exhibition spotlighting the observance of the Hispanic *Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) cultural celebration, this year by presenting works by Alverno College faculty, alumnae, students, and staff.

An opening reception for “Honoring Women of Importance—Day of the Dead” will be held Sunday, October 29, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. An artist talk will be presented at 2:00 p.m.

The Day of the Dead, celebrated in early November around the Catholic Feasts of All Saints and All Souls, is a cultural observance that remembers deceased family members and friends, and supports them on their spiritual journeys.

Valerie J. Christell, Alfons Gallery’s Director and Curator, said this year’s Day of the Dead celebration will feature *ofrendas*—ritual altars on which meaningful objects are placed during *Dia de los Muertos* observances. The exhibition will also include Calavera-style portraits of women that the invited exhibitors wish to honor. These will range from a family member or friend to an historic figure who has made a positive impact on the creativity, education, health and well-being or social, intellectual, and spiritual development of the exhibitor.

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Dara Larson, Alverno College Professor of Art, is acting as exhibition assistant to Alverno College Art Majors who are the show's co-curators: Ashley Acker, Cecilia Castro, and Celeste Skierski.

“I’m pleased that Alfons Gallery can again collaborate with Alverno College in celebrating Day of the Dead and in providing a venue for participants to acknowledge strong women who have impacted their lives,” Christell said.

In addition to regular gallery hours, the exhibit will be open on Saturday, November 11, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in conjunction with *Nuestra casa es su casa* (Our House is Your House), a Spanish-language Mass and fiesta held annually at St. Joseph Center.

Alfons Gallery is located at St. Joseph Center, 1501 S. Layton Blvd. (27th Street and Greenfield Avenue) in Milwaukee. Free parking is available in the lot that is accessible on 29th and Orchard (Alexia Circle entrance). For more information on Alfons Gallery, please email vchristell@sssf.org, call 414-385-5273, or visit www.sssf.org/gallery. The Gallery is open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday from 12:00-3:00 p.m.

About the Lead Co-Curator

Dara Larson is a practicing artist living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is a Professor of Art at Alverno College in Milwaukee where she teaches printmaking, fibers, digital and book arts and has led 12 student groups to study art and religion in Spain and Mexico. She has participated in fellowships from the United States Department of Education in the areas of peace and conflict studies and Latin studies curricular initiatives. Much of her personal art practice explores place, culture and navigation through shared traditions and global events.

Larson began building personal *ofrendas* 17 years ago. She experienced an amazing sense of continuity with seasons, harvest and memorializing life, and she believed that this ritual should be shared with others. Her community art practice began to include lectures and work with many groups to explore grief and healing practices associated with Day of the Dead participation.

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The significant learning opportunities provided in studying the traditional arts and contemporary adaptations to *el Dia de Los Muertos* resonates with people across cultures. The highly spiritual elements of building *ofrendas* allows for deeply personal collaborations that evoke memory and sensory connections that celebrate life.

About Alfons Gallery

Alfons Gallery's mission reflects the local and global work of the School Sisters of St. Francis. Exhibitions celebrate cultural diversity and advocate for justice, peace and the environment through the artistic vision. Special events aim to both educate and inspire viewers about our world and the impact every individual makes in it.

Our Cultural Shop's mission is to expand cultural awareness and support artisans working in our global missions as well as fine craft artists working locally.

About The School Sisters of St. Francis

The School Sisters of St. Francis are an international community of Catholic sisters who unite with others to build a just and peaceful world. Founded in 1874, they now have sisters, associates, staff, donors and volunteers actively working to address the needs of those who are poor and marginalized by society. Their mission is thriving throughout the United States, Europe, Latin America and India. For more information about the School Sisters of St. Francis, please visit www.sssf.org.



Roosevelt Calavera-Style Portrait

Artist: Dara Larson